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DISSEMINATION

for EGYPT file

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CRM/ISS/REGISTRATION UNIT

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Dear Colleague,

We write to draw your attention to the recent efforts undertaken by the Arab Republic of Egypt which have resulted, most recently, in a cease-fire between the Palestinian factions in Gaza and Israel. We hope this latest agreement, while likely of a temporary nature, will help create a climate more conducive to peace and immediately reduce bloodshed in the region. Clearly, Egypt's ongoing efforts should be both acknowledged and appreciated.

While this most recent cease-fire agreement is not intended to substitute for a comprehensive peace plan or even a durable, intermediary agreement, Egypt's intense diplomatic efforts have finally given all interested parties reasons to be hopeful that the violence which has plagued the Israeli and Palestinian people will cease and that a viable peace process, as called for by the Bush Administration, can proceed in earnest.

We would note that the situation in Gaza poses a grave risk for Israel, the Palestinian people, and Egypt. Moreover, the perpetuation of the status quo in Gaza risks further undermining American diplomatic initiatives and interests. In addition, this lingering problem has discouraged civility and diplomacy by inciting public opinion in the Arab world and Israel alike. Despite negative public backlash, the Egyptian government, which has opted for the path of peace since the time of President Sadat, should be complimented for its continued efforts which benefit all parties, including the United States.

We would also note that Egypt continues to work with the United States on a number of other important regional issues. These include, but are by no means limited to, transit of the Suez Canal and Egyptian airspace for American military ships and planes; military-to-military cooperation; training and coordination to strengthen the Egyptian-Gaza border; working with Israel to open the Rafah border; continued diplomatic engagement with the government of Iraq; and, cooperation on the war on terror.

The recent Gaza ceasefire again emphasizes the incredible importance Egypt plays in the Arab world. Egypt's partnership with the United States is an enormous asset to our country and the region, particularly at this critical time. As such, we would like to state our continued support for US assistance to Egypt – both economic and military – which helps our ally who time and again has demonstrated its support for peace and stability in the Middle East.

Sincerely,